

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE JOURNAL OF SPECULATIVE SCIENCE. JULY. St. Louis
New York. Charles Scribner & Co.

Every liberal-minded thinker must rejoice that the philosophical movement which may now be considered as fairly launched in this country is not to be composed of any exclusive elements, but promises to combine the various directions of speculative inquiry. John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and the great representatives of modern physical science, Tyndall and Huxley and Darwin, have drawn around them a distinguished claque of able Americans; their views have been set forth among us with singular vigor of statement and subtlety of analysis; and their actual contributions to the cause of human knowledge have been gratefully accepted, even by those who are not ranked with the converts to their peculiar opinions. But they are not the supreme masters of their field. Other leaders of thought share with them the domain of speculation, and guaranteed a free and impartial discussion of conflicting ideas. Among the champions of the older schools of metaphysics, the "Journal of Speculative Philosophy" holds, of course, the foremost place. From the beginning, it exhibited such boldness of thought, such intellectual pluck, as for want of a better term, we must call it, as to win the admiration even of readers who had no sympathy with its doctrines. Since that time, it has pursued its "daring and perious way" with undimming courage, sounding the most obscure depths, grappling with the most knotty questions, soaring to the most transcendent heights, and uttering its clear clarion voice from the cloud and the storm with an emphasis almost like the sound from the sacred mount. The present number is an admirable exponent of its aims and its character. It seeks to discover and proclaim the truth in the sphere of abstract thought, leaving mainly to other explorers the field of physical observations. A brief, though one of the most remarkable articles is on "The Parmenides of Plato." In two towns of Illinois, Quincy and Jacksonville, there are flourishing philosophical societies that have been pursuing vigorously the study of Plato, and this paper is among the first fruits of their transactions. Another essay is devoted to Shakespeare's "Tragedy of Julius Caesar," pointing out in a vein of refined criticism the characteristics of that drama, and the principles of dramatic art in general. The discussion differs from the common treatment of the subject, much as the deep soundings of the Atlantic differ from skipping stones over the surface of a pond. "Is Positive Science Nominalism or Realism?" answers a profound question in favor of the latter, illustrating the "new doctrine of realism now arising in place of the dismal nominalism and stolid conceitiveness in vogue." Mr. John Weiss's paper on "Theories of Mental Genesis" is characteristic. If not conclusive, opposing the theory of Huxley and other modern psychologists, which derives all possible mental functions from "the impacts of objectivity," and perhaps occasionally losing precision of statement in the affluence and beauty of its illustrations. Strange to say, one of the articles most nearly approaching the borders of popular interest is a translation from Hegel's "Aesthetics," in which the crabb'd old Swabian dog-mut underlines to enlightened the human race on the philosophy of love. Statements like the following may perhaps be understood even by the common mind without the aid of special illumination: "Love does not depend upon reflection and the censuris of the understanding, as may often be the case with honor, but finds its origin in emotion, and has at the same time, where sex is concerned, the foundation of spiritual and natural relations. However, this difference is especially only because the individual puts into this union his soul, the spiritual and infinite element of his being. This renouncing of self in order to be identified with another, this disinterestedness, in which the subject finds again the plenitude of his being—this self-forgetfulness, so that the lover exists not, cares not for himself, but finds the source of his being in another—constitutes the infinite character of love. And its chief beauty is that it does not remain mere impulse and feeling; but imagination, under the charm of love, creates in itself an anchor to existence, and, if deprived of love by adversity, vanishes as a light that is extinguished at the first rough breath."

There is a certain homely wisdom, as well as a fine artistic sense in the remarks given below, though one ought not to dive so deep down as Hegel to learn their truth for the first time. "The world and real life are full of conflicting interests. One on side stands society with its actual organization, domestic life, civil and political relations, law, justice, customs, &c.; and in opposition to this positive reality rises love, a passion which terminates in noble, ardent souls, which now unites itself with religion, now subordinates it, forgets it even, and, regarding itself alone the essential, indeed the only or highest necessity of life, is able not only to determine to renounce all else and to feed with the beloved into a wilderness, but may besides deliver it to all extremes, even to the renunciation of human dignity. This opposition cannot fail to occasion numerous collisions, for the other interests of life also make valid their demands and rights, and thereby affect love in its pretensions to supremacy. Love presents in all these respects, it is true, an elevated character in so far as it remains in general not only an affection of the sexes for each other, but manifests in itself a rich, beautiful, noble nature; and is, in its unity with others, living, active, brave, self-sacrificing. But romantic love has likewise its limits; namely, there is wanting in its comprehension the general and universal. It is only the personal sense of the individual subject that shows itself satisfied, not with religion and the objective value of human existence—with the well-being of the family, of the state, and of native land—with professional duties, freedom, and religion—but aspires only to find itself reflected in another, and to have its passion shared. This comprehension corresponds neither to its formal ardor, nor truly to the totality which must be in itself a concrete individuality. In the family, in marriage even, in a moral point of view both public and private, the subjective perception exists as such, and the union with exactly this and no other individual, may not be the principal thing upon which it depends. But in romantic love all turns upon this principle, the mutual love of two individuals. Indeed, only this or that individual exists who finds his subjective particularity in the contingency of caprice. To every one he believed appears as to the maiden her lover, always incomparable; each finds the other the supreme type of beauty and perfection. But if it is true that each one makes of the beloved a Venus or something more, it happens that there are many who pass as the same, for as indeed all know, there are in the world many excellent maidens, pretty of good, who all, or at least the majority, and their admirers, lovers, and husbands, to whom they appear beautiful, virtuous, and lovely. Only this exclusive and absolute preference is purely an affair of the heart, an entirely personal choice; and the unlimited pertinacity indispensable in making just this one his life and his highest consciousness, proves itself the ultimate choice of necessity."

The number closes with a notice of President Porter's "Science of Nature," which is pronounced to be "a successful vindication of the spiritual over the sensuous," and of Dr. Barto's "Radical Problems," which is highly and warmly commended, as giving an invaluable impulse to thought, and the result, even to its faults, of the versatile, appreciative, and poetic mind of the writer."

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